

AVALON

Missouri Southern's Monthly Art and Literary Magazine

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Avalon is published by Missouri Southern's communications department as a supplement of *The Chart*.

Persons wanting to submit material (artwork, photographs, short stories, and poetry) may do so by dropping it by *The Chart* office, Room 117, Hearnes Hall. Artwork and photographs submitted must be ready for publication. Size alterations may be made on such work if it is needed in order to make the material fit within *Avalon's* pages. Literary material submitted must be in a legible format (typewritten is preferred).

***Avalon* claims no publication rights to work appearing in its pages.**

EDITOR'S COLUMN

It's amazing! We've actually gotten enough submissions to put together another *Avalon* this semester. And that's not all—*Avalon* is now bigger and better.

At the beginning of the semester, it was as if no one had any idea this publication existed. When our first issue of the semester came out, I felt we defined what *Avalon* was and is.

We've gotten enough support from artists and writers to compile this 20-page issue. We received short stories, poems, essays, photos, and artwork—"the works." Some material which was saved from the last batch of submissions appears in this issue, as well as the material submitted within the past month.

"The Gallery" section (the centerfold) of this issue features sculpture—that is, photographs of various pieces of sculpture. These works, which have been on display in Spiva Art Center, were done by students from Beginning Sculpture class. Mr. Prater and I designed The Gallery in hopes of bringing a new attraction to *Avalon*. And, that we've done. We intend to continue having this feature in all future issues of *Avalon*. As we've had prints, and now sculpture, in The Gallery, it is likely we will feature some other form of artwork in issues to come—possibly watercolor paintings or photos.

The Gallery is, by no means, the "heart" of the magazine. If an artist's work does not appear in The Gallery, yet appears elsewhere in the publication, he or she is not taking a backseat to someone whose work appears in the centerfold. The heart of the magazine is wherever the reader's main interest is. If you just want to "look at the pictures," perhaps The Gallery is the place to look. Or, if you think art is stupid (Yes, there are actually people who think this way—not me, in particular.), check out the poetry or the short

stories. The perfect reader of *Avalon* would examine every bit of the contents of each issue. It is not likely that "the perfect reader" exists (since there are many different people of many different tastes), so *Avalon* will have to feature many different things to please the students, the faculty, and the staff members at Missouri Southern and others not associated with the College.

As well as expanding the publication from 12 to 20 pages, *Avalon* has experienced other changes. We're beginning to have an "actual" staff. In its first year, (I really like to bring up the past) the publication only had its editor, the Hon. Simon P. McCaffery; in its second year, it had only its editor, Bob Vice, and assistant editor, Teresa Merrill; now, *Avalon* has two co-editors, an assistant editor, and three editorial assistants. I would really like to have a full staff, adding from 5 to 15 people.

To explain something irregular, Nancy Putnam has been named assistant editor of the magazine because of the great amount of work she has put into it. Nancy is a graduate of Southern. No one ever said graduates couldn't work on the staff. No graduates work on *The Chart* staff—that's kind of an unwritten rule. Once you graduate, you take off. Nancy used to work with *The Chart* as an associate editor, but she never worked with *Avalon*. She's hanging around now because she always hangs around Mike. And, since she is so very helpful (with all of the skills she acquired from her *Chart* work), she's now an assistant editor.

Hopefully, we'll be seeing more people like Nancy and the three editorial assistants we now have join the staff.

For those of you who are here to appreciate this publication, I'm probably being too extensive in talking about *Avalon's* staff. So, I'll end this thing and let you get to looking over the rest of this "fine-quality publication."

Mark R. Mulik

Uh, oh...

In our haste to complete the last issue of *Avalon*, we made an error. We neglected to give credit to the print which appeared on the cover. The print was done by Richard Knoblauch, and the rest of the cover was designed by the staff.

COVER ART

This issue's cover was designed by Mike Prater of the *Avalon* staff.

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The Teton Mountain Express

Stumbling through the darkness
 Pursuing endless cause
 Shadows telling stories
 Through the pictures they draw
 Away from the beginning
 Not looking for an end
 A mystic silence broken
 By whispers from the wind
 Majestic hallways winding
 Piercing through the sky
 A million lives beyond them
 Could I touch them if I try
 In the state of my confusion
 Reflecting in a mirror
 Outlines grow around me
 Shimmering in unknown fear
 The chill of creeping darkness
 Breathes faintly in the air
 While entering unknown limits
 I just couldn't help but stare
 Surrendered from the race
 A web across my face
 My hellish way to heaven
 Lost in time and space
 Away from all the pain
 Life's experience I will gain
 Marveling the abductor
 Never wanting to be sane
 Motionless in motions
 To perch the endless flight



Screaming out in laughter
 Calling back across the night
 A doublevision dreamland
 It's such reality
 Shooting across the heavens
 Into my galaxy
 The play that's in my mind
 Receives a guiding light
 Pink clouds wave hello
 From the stage no longer night
 Beholding there before me
 With the grandest of them all
 Just looking all around
 Like feeling very small

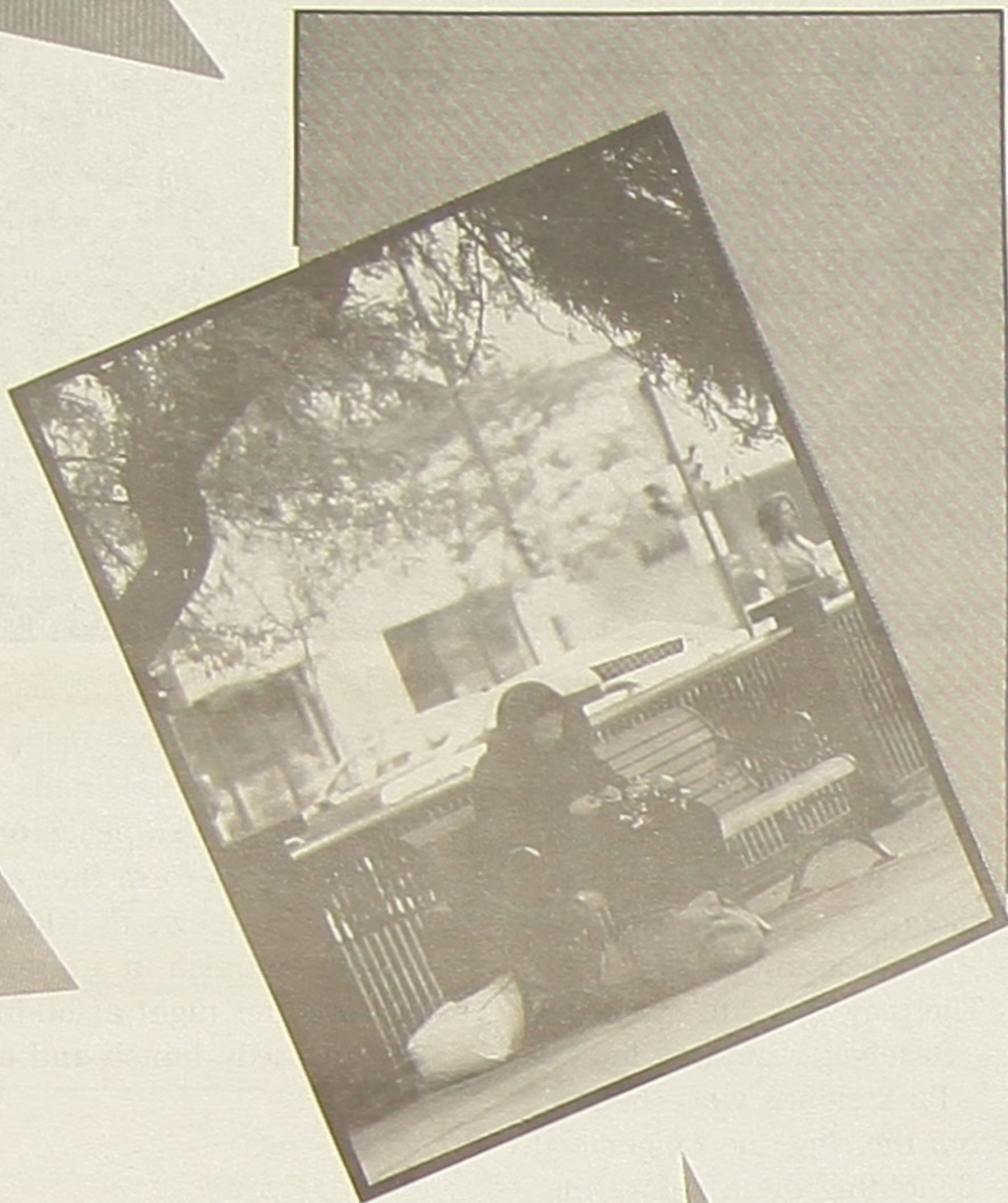
Listening for the magic
 Seeings unexplained
 Deep within so peaceful
 Gentle kisses form the rain
 Destination views that linger
 Soaking anquish in a stream
 Just another night of hiking
 For the rowdy bunch and me.



Poetry and Photos

by

Kevin Keller



A Lesson Well-Thought But Only If Lived

short fiction by Kevin Keller

A rude awakening of Janet Jackson blaring out "What Have You Done For Me Lately" slowly started to bring Douglas Allen back to the conscious state. He automatically made his half-dazed reach of attempting to hit the snooze button on the clock radio. Finally realizing what the time was, Doug noticed it was too late for the snooze button. He had too much to accomplish.

The sun was shining in through a bare, curtainless window as Doug prepared to face another day after an even shorter night. The thought of dreaming came to blunt reality as he forced himself up. Starting the ritual stumble to the kitchen, he looked around the humble abode to find it more in shambles than his current state of mind.

Opening the refrigerator, the sight and thought of food about made him sick. Actually, Doug knew he was going for the coffee jug; you know, pre-made, just pop it in the microwave for those mornings your head can't wait for a fresh pot to brew.

After throwing some rags on, Doug decided to enjoy his cup outside. Looking over the city skyline would have to take the place of a morning newspaper. Like the first cigarette and coffee of the day, the cool spring morning air fell right into place for one's revival of the soul.

Sitting back and starting to look around, once again the thoughts of escape from the

concrete jungle started creeping into Doug's mind, but something was different about today. The game plan was in action; for later in the day, Mom and Dad were coming up from the country, pulling a trailer, and he would once again be home in natural surroundings.

After five years of chaotic survival in city living, hauling hay, riding horses, quiet nights, and all seemed so welcoming while looking at the never-ending rat race below. Thinking how so much needed to be done and with so little time to do it, a new sense of energy filled him as he decided to come inside and wonder where to start first.

Unfortunately, Mr. Coffee was already packed away which sent Doug back to the microwave. He figured he might as well start in the kitchen as long as he was in there. All the dishes and tableware were finished. Just the food and garbage were left to go.

Going through the cabinets, Doug started to remember how long some of the things had been shelved. Since coming home to finish school, he knew it'd be at least a couple of years before he'd be back on his own—needing flour, cooking oil, and the likes. They obviously had to go.

After endless procedures of moving and trips down the elevator to the garbage dumpster, a quick three hours had passed. Suddenly the cold leftover pizza in the fridge didn't look too bad. He was actually beginning to feel like a normal person again.

Like his head was clearing up, so was most of the scattered debris which had been and earlier morning greeting. There were still a few things needed to be done and endless garbage to dispose of. For the most part, boxes and furniture were scattered about waiting for their grand exit and long journey to a new home.

Standing in the elevator and looking and feeling like a slob with garbage bags hanging off every grasping point of his body, a friend from the seventh floor boarded for the ride down. They proceeded to talk and say good-bye and as Doug watched her head towards the front door, he began to question himself about the decision to leave while walking out the back.

Five years of memories quickly started passing before him when he noticed out of the corner of his eye, something topple behind the dumpster. Still off in his own little world, Doug tossed the bags in and turned to leave when seeing a shriveled-up, little old lady regain her feet on the other side. Appearing rather timid, she was reluctant to look him eye to eye.

Doug doubted he could either though if he was so into collecting aluminum cans that he practically crawled into trash dumpsters looking for them. If this was her normal procedure, she certainly knew she had a goldmine from the way the entire building seemed to carry on.

Doug turned to walk away, but something made him take a closer look. An unknown prompt brought him to ask if everything was alright while stepping around to the other side of the dumpster. Not really paying attention, this hunched-over, mysterious creature continued to dig while standing on a milkcrate she had obviously fallen off of earlier.

Then what really caught Doug's eye was the little pull-along shopping cart sitting along side crammed full to the rim with things—and topped off with the food items he'd thrown out earlier in the morning.

He rolled his eyes and they nearly popped from his head as he thought to himself, "Lady, that's garbage!" To be such a fool as it finally hit him. A passing moment seemed like eternity as he reached out and waved to this still-undistracted person.

Still hesitant to look him head-on, Doug found himself in a humble way asking her if she was hungry. She gave no reply which keyed him to repeat his inquiry.

He rolled his eyes and they nearly popped from his head as he thought to himself, "Lady, that's garbage!"

His eyes finally met hers, which were deeply set in a weathered-looking face. Another moment passed and with still no reply, Doug told her to come with him. Reluctant with distrust, he waved her on. She grabbed her cart and slowly followed him to the back door.

She looked again at him as if she couldn't come in, but he somehow persuaded his "lunch guest" without having to say anything. Walking up to the elevator, human nature caused Doug to look around and hope no one saw her with him. Still in silence while on the elevator, she half-smiled a toothless smile to him.

Once he got her inside, it was almost a calm state of panic about what to do. They walked into the kitchen and she sat down to a bare table. Opening the refrigerator, it was almost as if just another friend was over as he just asked as usual, "What do ya want?"

"What do ya got?" were the first words she said.

No seven-course meal was going to come about from the odds and ends left in the fridge, but they'd make do. Expecting to stand back and watch utensils fly, it was like having a calm meal with any grandmother. Not seeming to over-eat, she finished and began to tell how her mother was really sick

and she was out taking care of her which was why she was digging in the trash. Not wanting to hurt her pride, Doug just smiled and nodded.

She smiled again as her broken-down body rose from the table and reached for the cart. Before she had taken a second step, Doug compassionately asked her to wait. Without hesitation, he began opening cupboards and pulling down any and everything left.

Keeping pride in mind, the explanation about moving that night and not wanting to take all this stuff seemed sufficient enough. Her eyes seemed to brighten as they ended up unloading half of the valuable junk to make room for cans of peas, tomato soup, and food that would have sat there no matter how starved he'd pretended to be.

As if in thanks, she dug deep into her basket and popped Doug a hot beer that'd probably been riding for days. Holding it up to his face, the smell alone was enough to rekindle last night's nightmare. Not wanting to seem too ungrateful, he set it on the table as she waddled toward the door.

Still half-stunned from the whole ordeal, Doug hurriedly went to the door. Right before stepping into the hallway, she raised up the best she could and, with tears in her eyes, said, "God bless you, son."

Doug came back in and fell on the couch as his mind started to drift while looking at empty walls, empty rooms, empty feelings. Had this really happened?

Curious as to where she went, he hurriedly stepped through the window back onto the fire escape to start scanning the streets below. There she was—about three blocks away. Fixing to outskirt the Kansas City Plaza where endless money was spent daily, here was some unfortunate lady, happy as she could be, carting off garbage and leftovers.

Within the month, a new comedy release called *Down and Out In Beverly Hills* had been released about some bum who thought he had it rough. Any visit to Chicago and Los Angeles wouldn't be complete without seeing the street people or them catching pigeons in the park to eat. How many times had there been on the newscasts about the homeless in Kansas City? This happened right in Doug's own backyard.

He stood and watched her walk away until she was out of sight. He never knew her name, or if she had a home, or if she even had anybody or anything beside what she pulled along side of her.

Looking down as she disappeared, Doug thanked God that he was fortunate as he was and asked to never end up in a situation as the homeless. Beginning to look inside himself, Doug hoped that his looking down on someone like that would only be while at some higher elevation and never on an eye-to-eye level. A lesson well-thought, but only if lived.



Bunji Abe

Saturn

Cold, aloof
 The burden bearer
 Teacher of duties
 Giver of responsibilities
 The ring around
 Built from aeons past
 Hard, stern
 And yet not harsh
 Dense, solid
 Practical, methodical
 Ages me ageless
 Before my timeless
 time

Lise Schilling

Bobby's Song

Come walk with me and be my friend
 And I will tell you tales
 of empty days, lonely nights
 and silent trips to hell
 And though I walk a different path
 than others seem to go
 I do the very best I can,
 it's the only way I know.

Come walk with me and be my friend,
 If only for a while
 Then maybe you will understand
 That I am still God's child
 Though I may be different
 Than the world would have me be.
 Be my friend for just a time,
 Come and walk with me.

Willamina Stone



"On Sassafras and Elm"
 Cyndi Evans



"City Image"
Kevin Tyler

Hot

Aspen winter snow
Is not what I see
Before my eyes-
But you,
Standing in the fire
In the glow
In the heat
Beckoning
Me inside
To the fire
While the snow
Outside-
Falls.

Darcy Tucker



"Wars"
Julia Cheung

In Heated Tryst Of Wind

In heated tryst of wind
now grates my eyes in blade-light,
while blistered moon
uncurls its hollow throat
and cries so sedimentary still.

Red into retina outfevers blue.

I swallow waves
and taste one footstep
within a swollen grain of sand;
white lights now glaze spasmodic
upon the altar of my smile.

I lift the happy sadness of my tongue,
and drink to words
that no longer hear of me.

Randy Scott



"Femininity"
Sheila Myers

Aqua Effusion

(An Elegy for Stephen)

The fever that spurns the leaf
grinds the mirrored window of a tree,
what etches the elastic cloud
now pounds down a rain.

It is this night
that tightens into sleep
and huddles each breath
so suddenly still.

It is this gull
that dips its wing
and ties the knot
of your woolen grave.

Randy Scott



Stephanie Ferguson

Cold

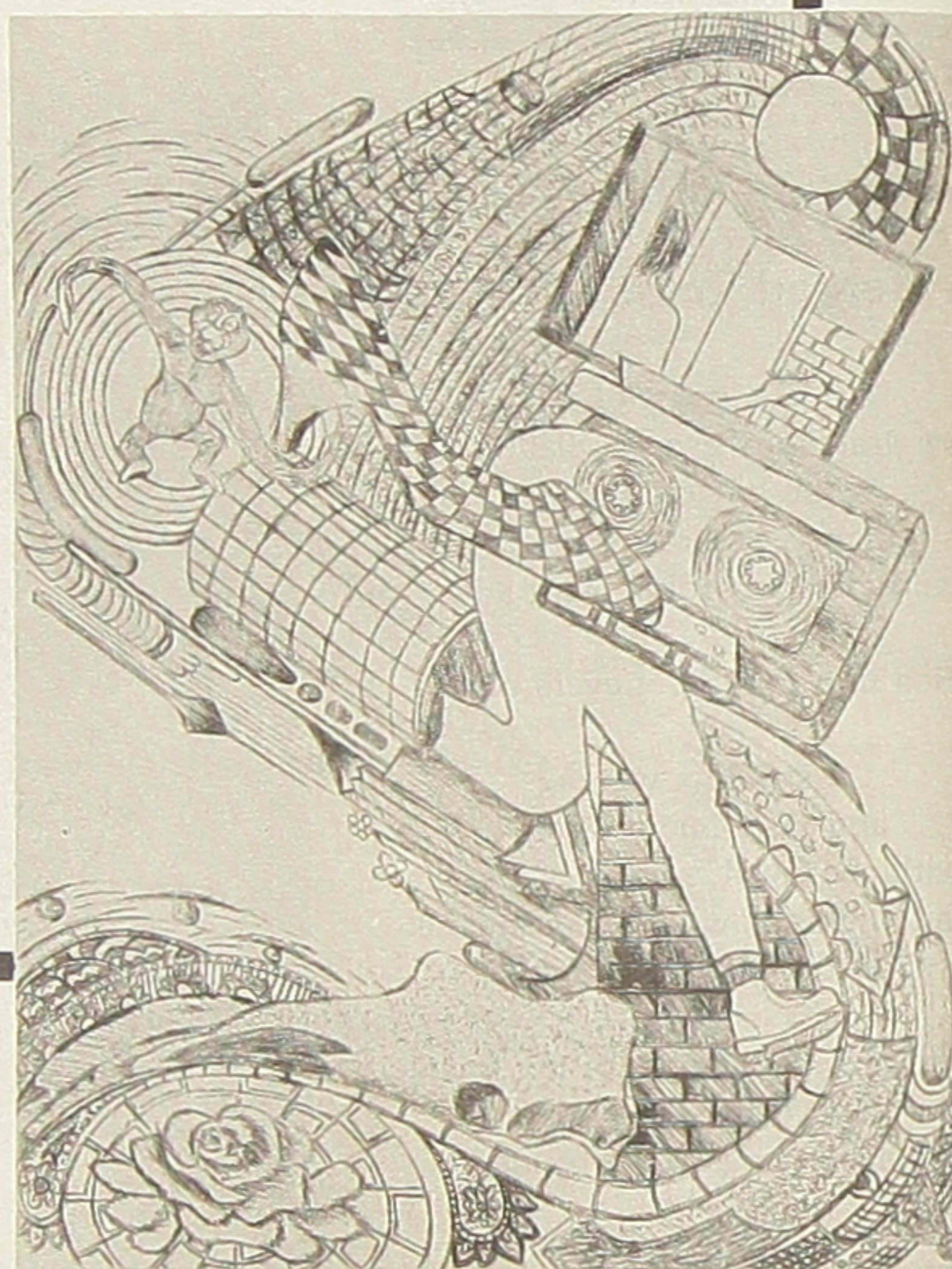
Glinting-
Almost black
Are your eyes
As they flash
To meet with
Mine
A rising crescendo
Is silent
As your gaze persists
Down
Mine fall
And silently
The cymbals
Come crashing

Darcy Tucker

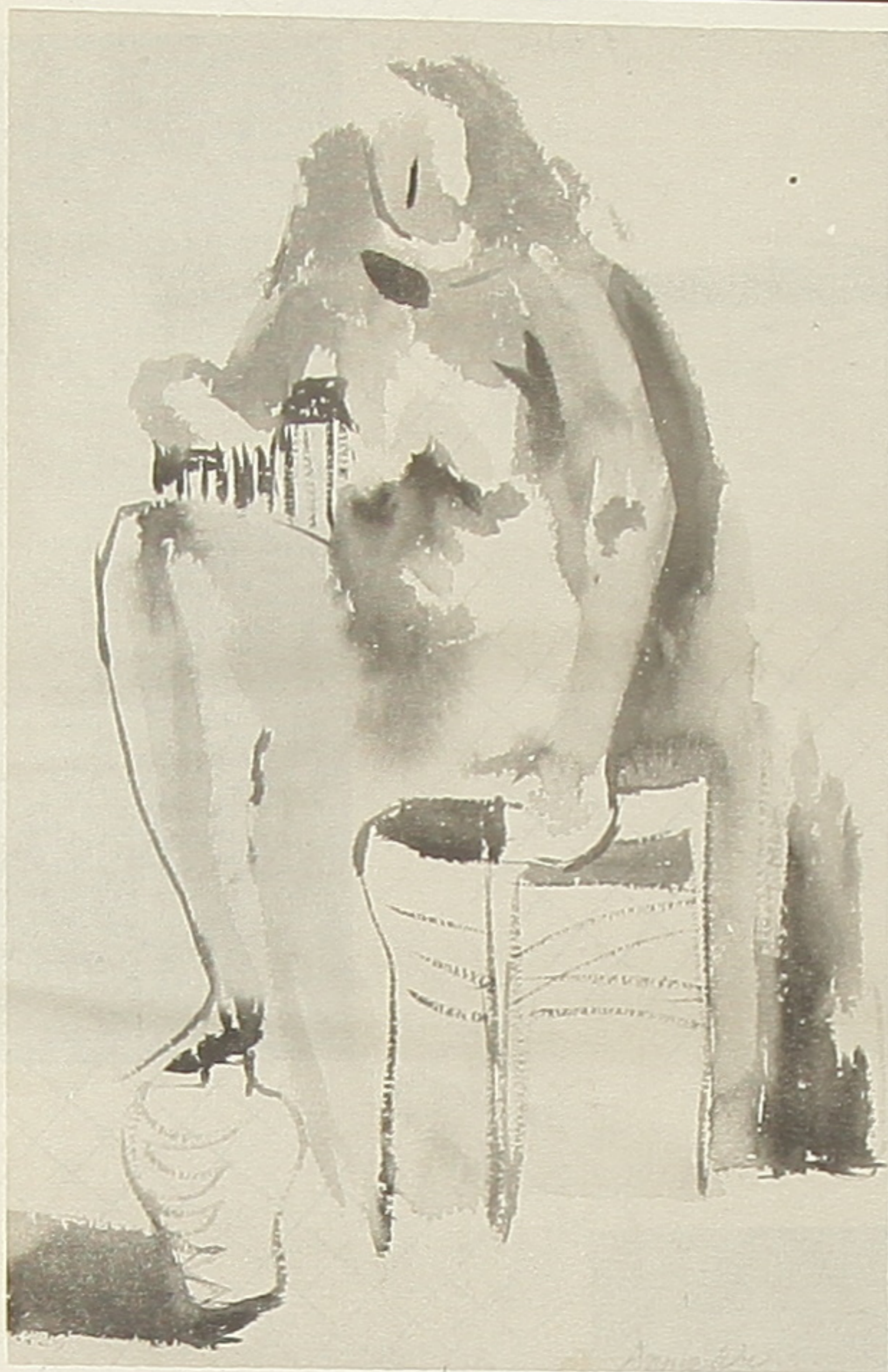
Untitled

I walk into the room
And the silence that you bare
Comes flowing through the place
While you all stop and stare
I'm not your carbon copy
'Cause what you see is me
The way I look
The way I act
Or whatever it may be
Could you live your life for me
As I could do for you
Even though we're different
That's what you want to do
I am what I am
And that's the way I'll be
But why is this so hard
For those around to see
'Cause the real you and me
Is coming from the heart
And that's the joy to living
The most important part

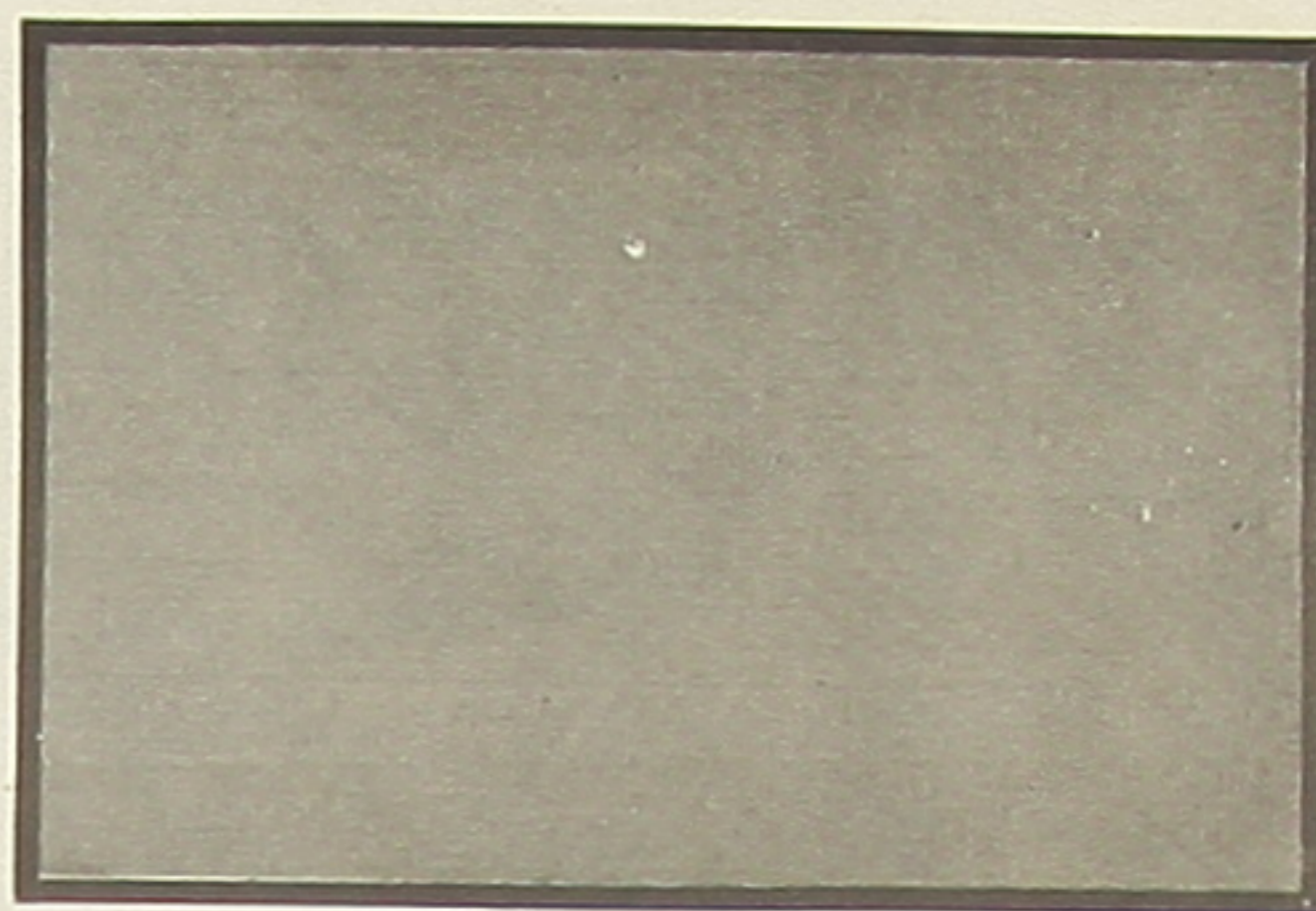
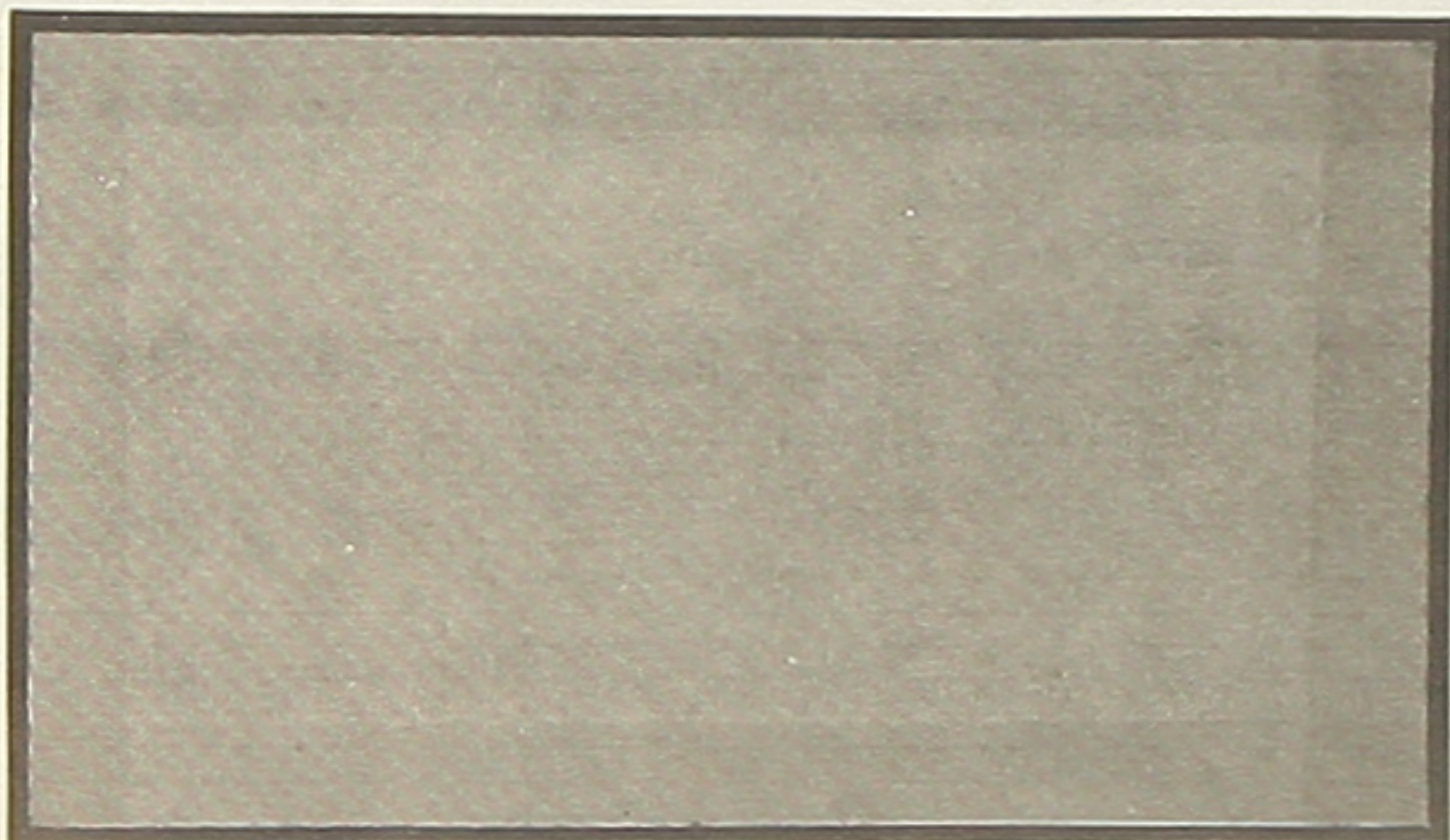
Kevin Keller



Danny Dryden



Annie Wu



Freedom, A Different Kind Of

The seconds tick away
 Soon, it will all be over
 A total escape, my only choice
 Sweden, Switzerland, anywhere
 So long as there are none like I there

For my father, I wish otherwise
 But, now, more than ever
 I know that I cannot
 I don't know her
 It frightens me

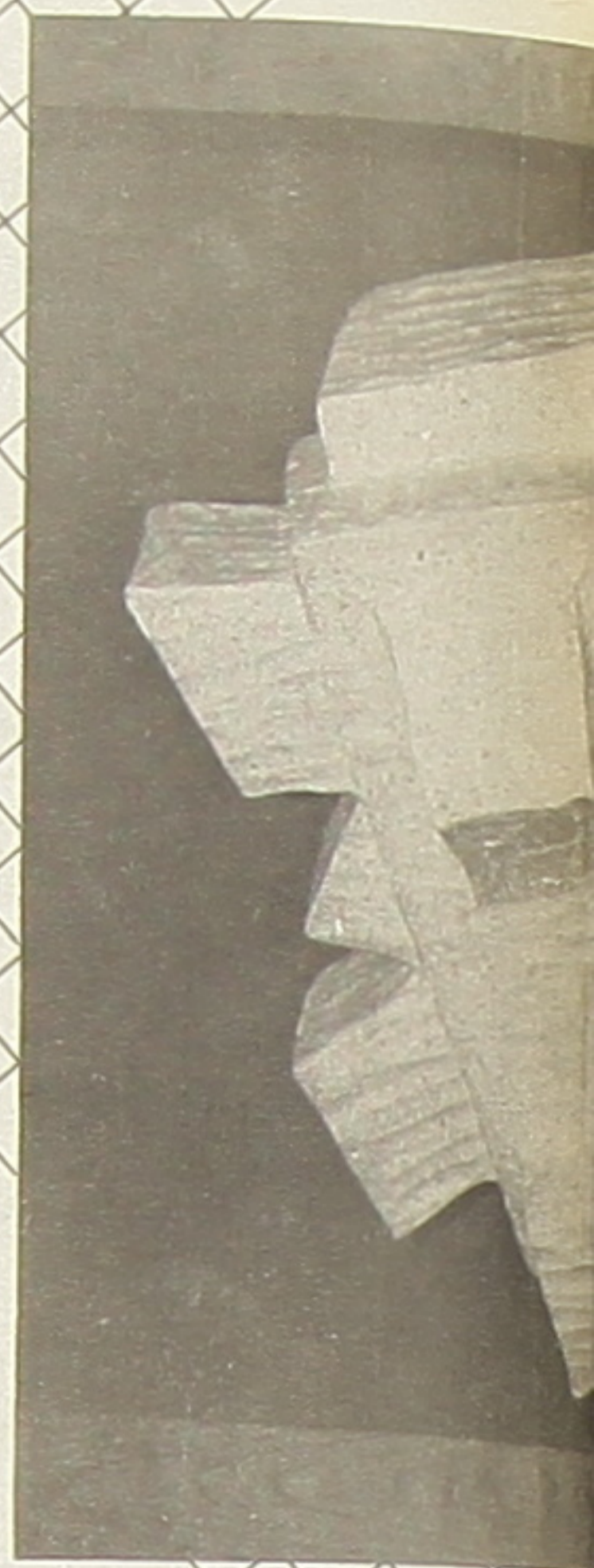
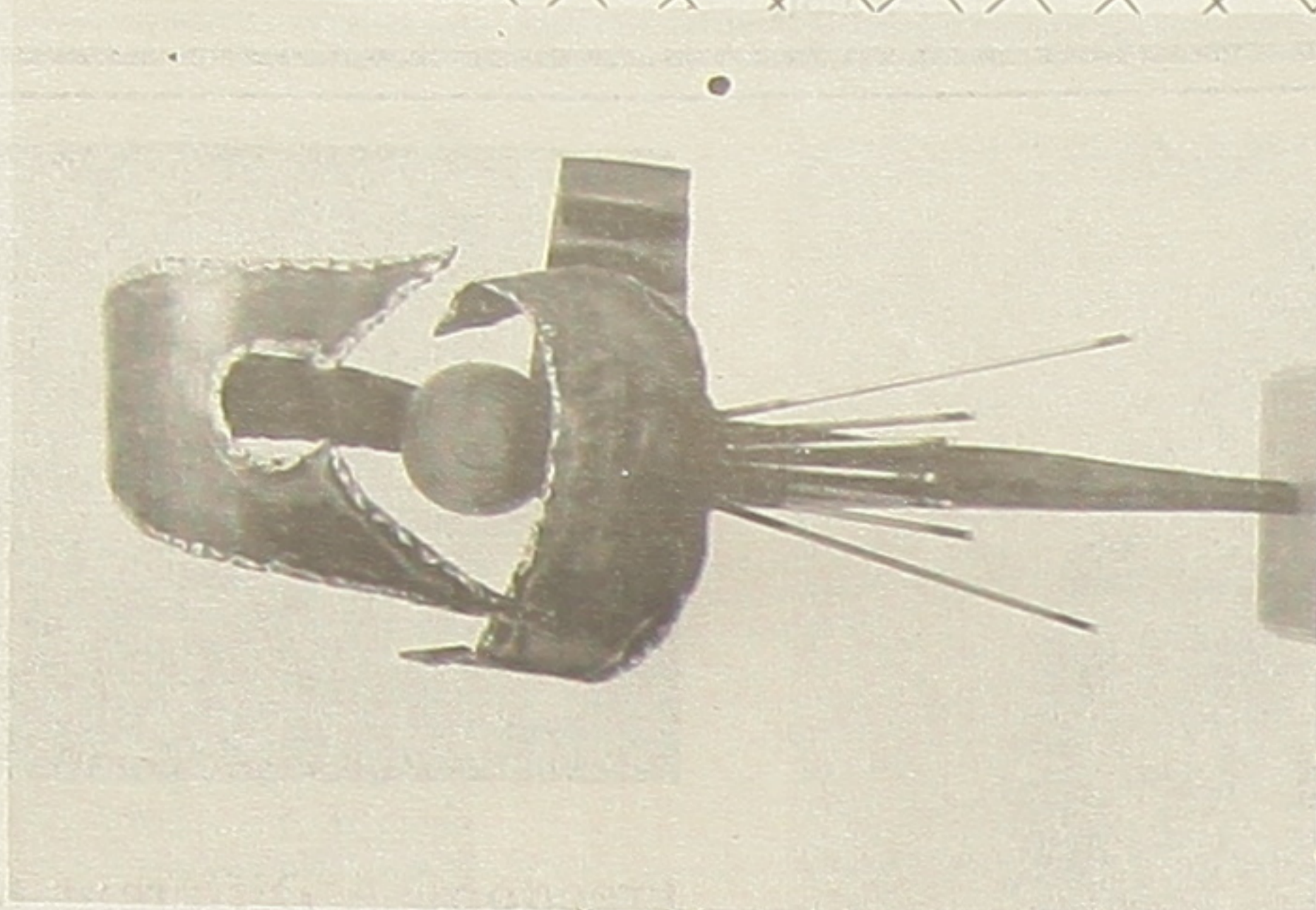
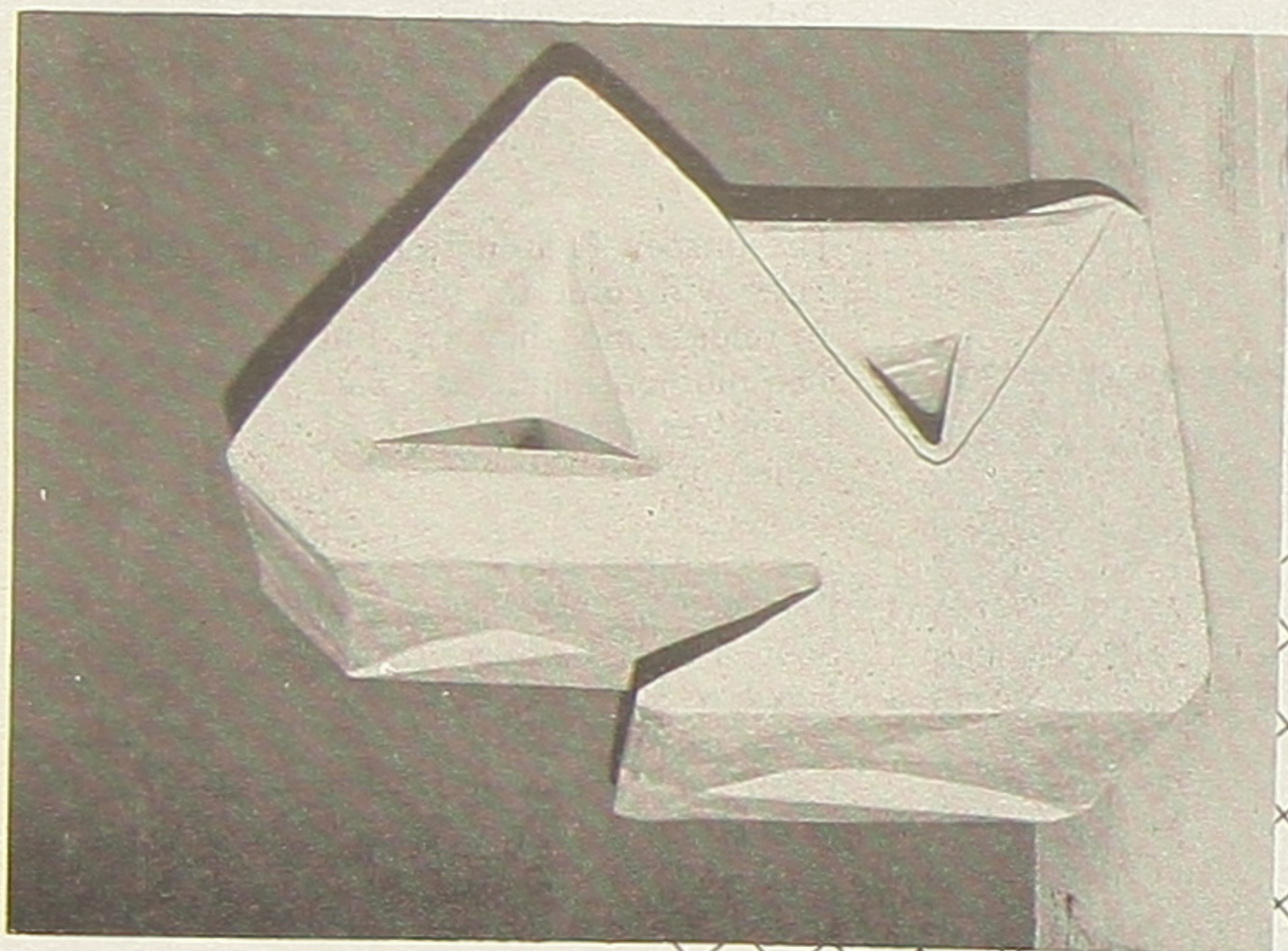
I look into the dark night
 Where, where is he
 Only he, they, only they understood
 They, my friends, my closest dearest friends
 My only link to sanity, to freedom
 Where is he

The unseen Phantoms that bound me,
 They will come for me
 To release me, they say, but I know
 The moment nears as I pace, afraid
 I look yet again
 Where is he

Ah, I see his car
 I see the signal; all is prepared
 Soon, I shall be away from now
 Sweden, Switzerland, no matter
 A thought comes to me
 I smile at the irony
 Perhaps, there, I will meet the right Woman

Dharmendra Patel

The Gallery





The works appearing in this section were done by students of Beginning Sculpture. The photography is courtesy of Avalon.

Plaster & Vermiculite:

Mark Cole (Top, left)

Marc DuBois (Middle)

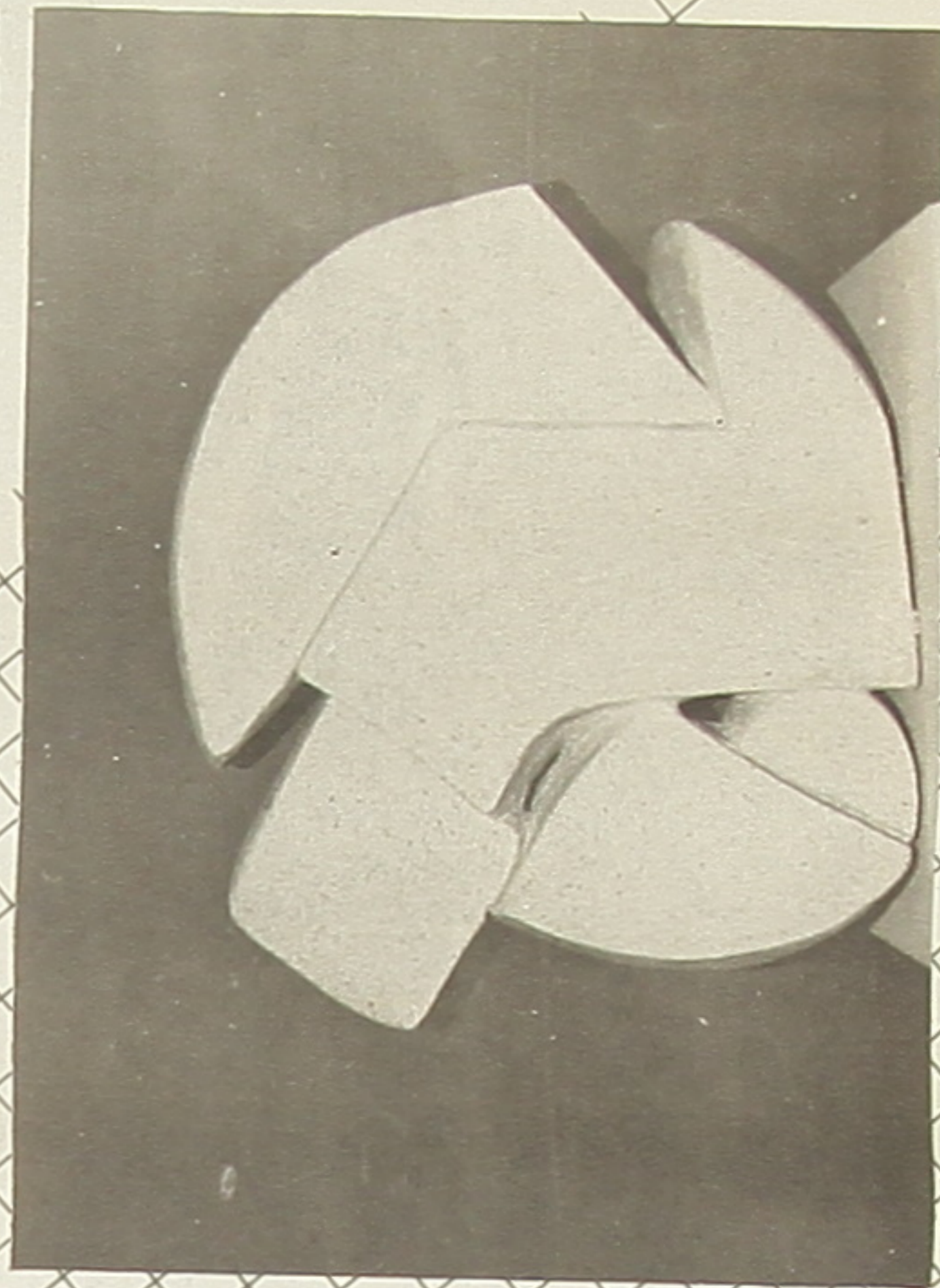
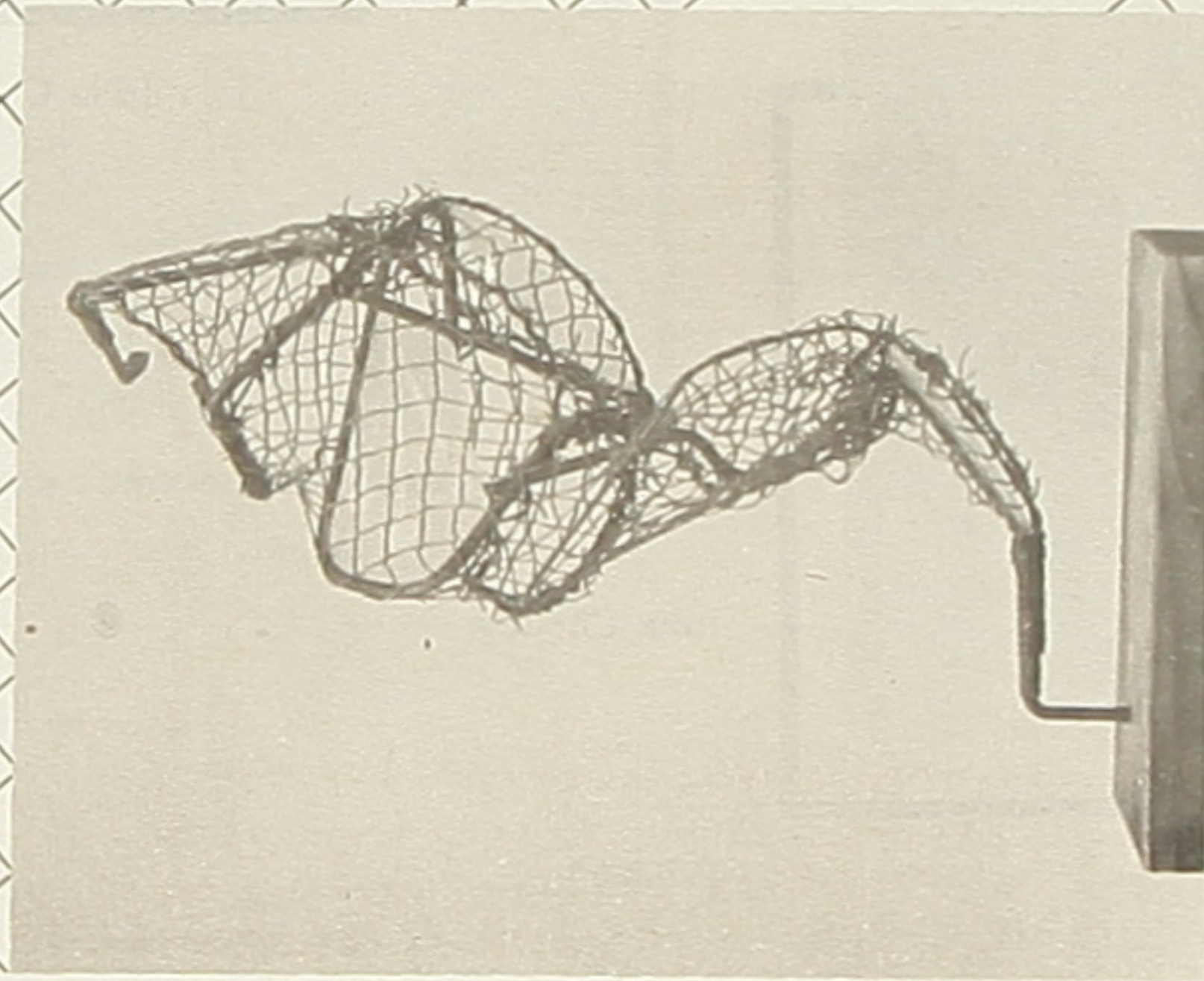
Annie Wu (Bottom, right)

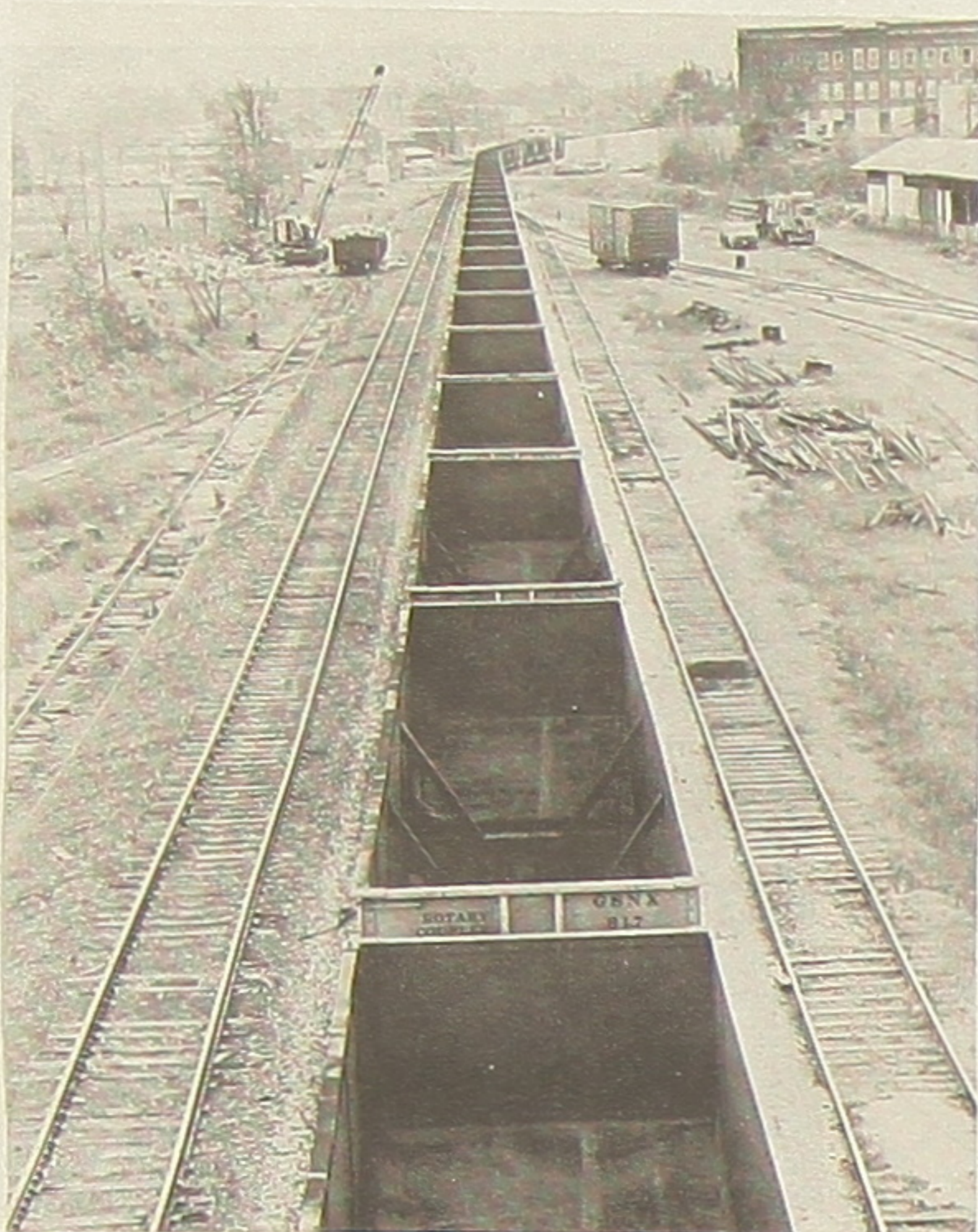
Welded/Brazed Steel:

Jorge Leyva (Top, right)

Mixed Media:

Jim Nivens (Bottom, left)





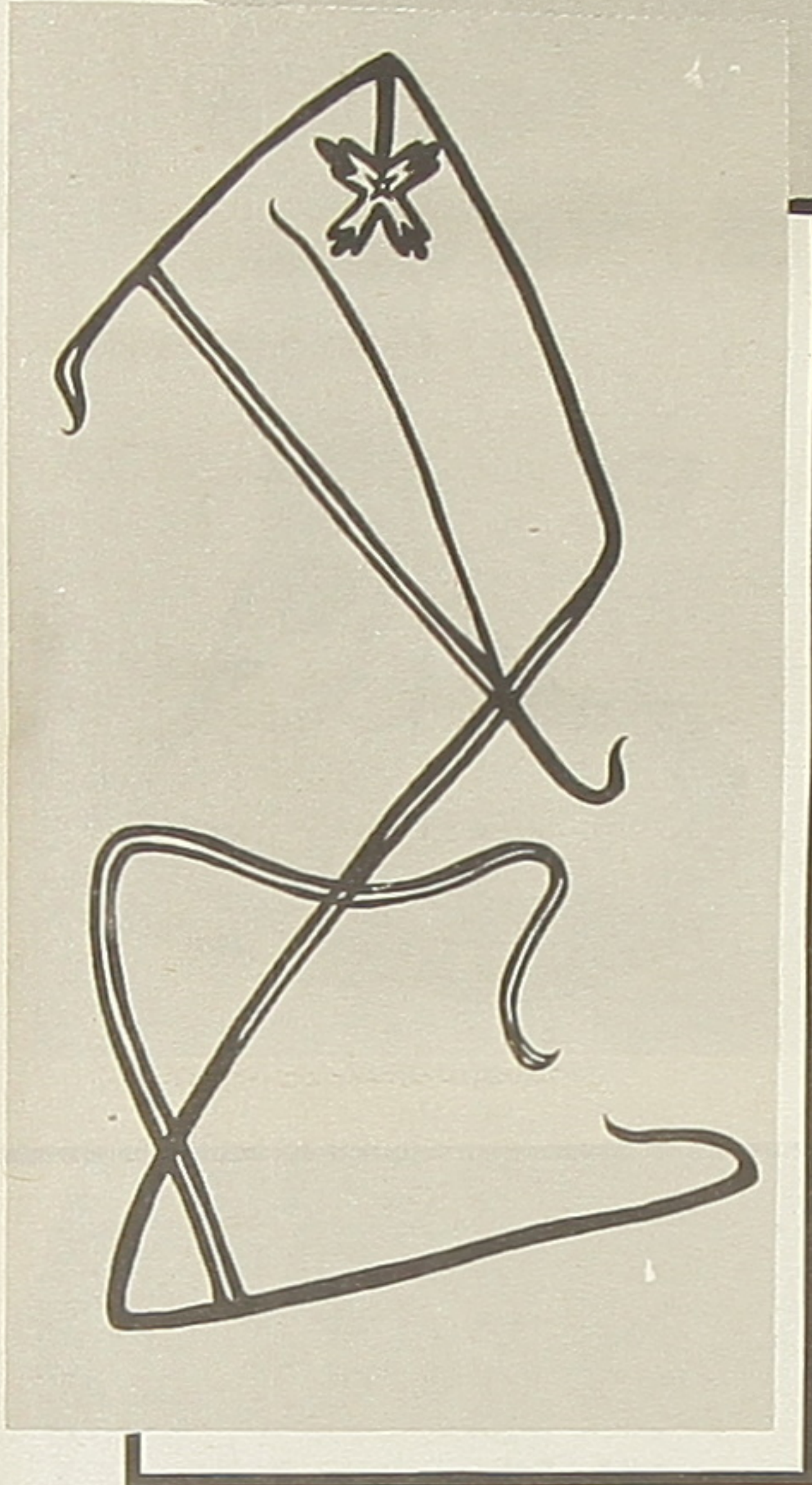
Sean Vanslyke



Julia Cheung



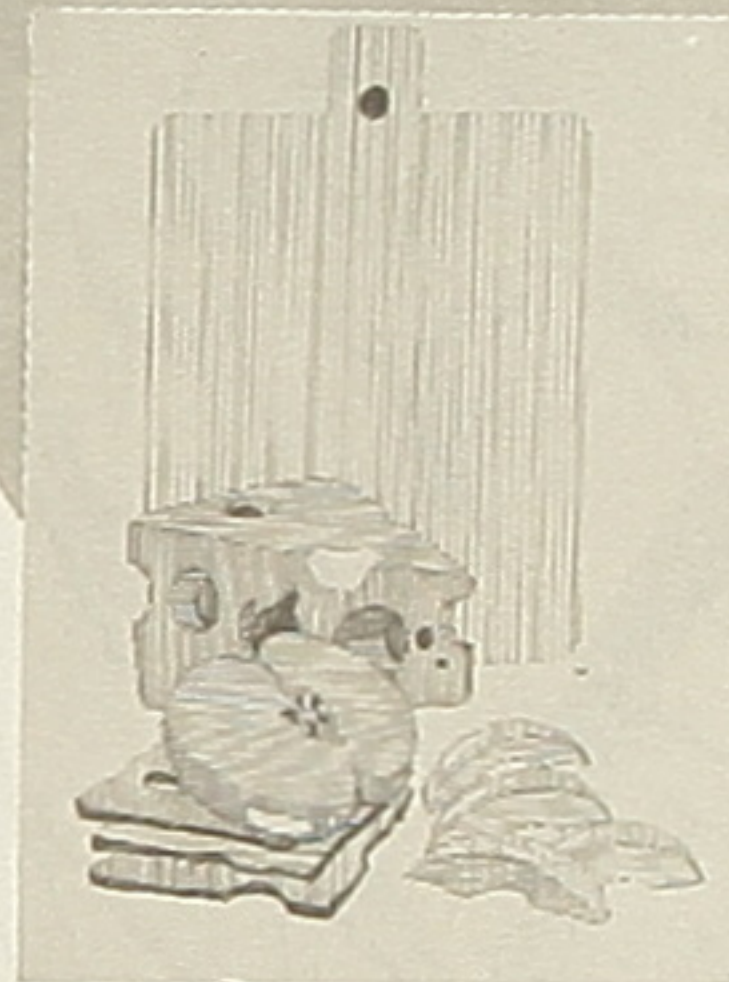
Julia Cheung



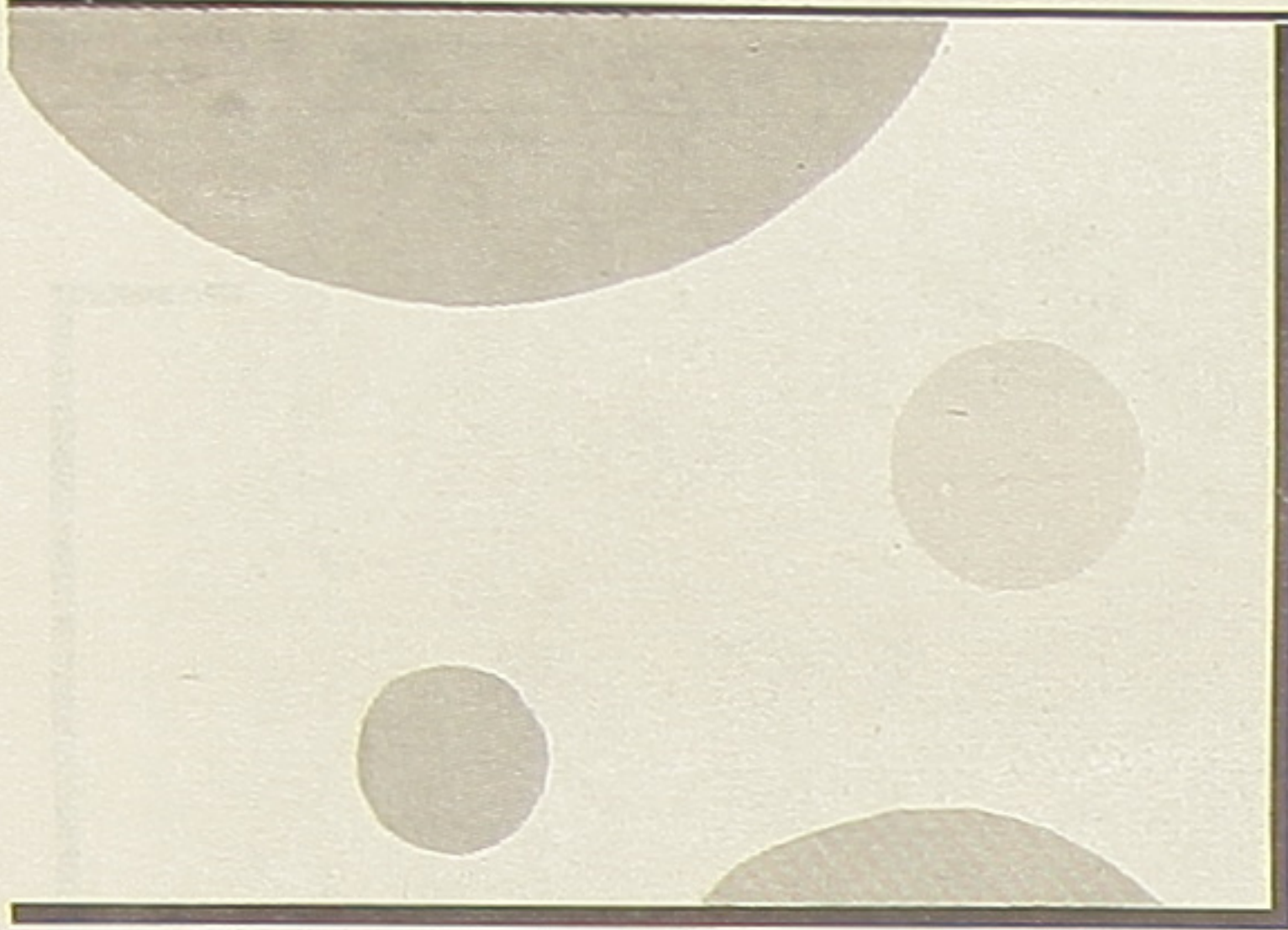
Julia Cheung



Hsiao-Hui Lin

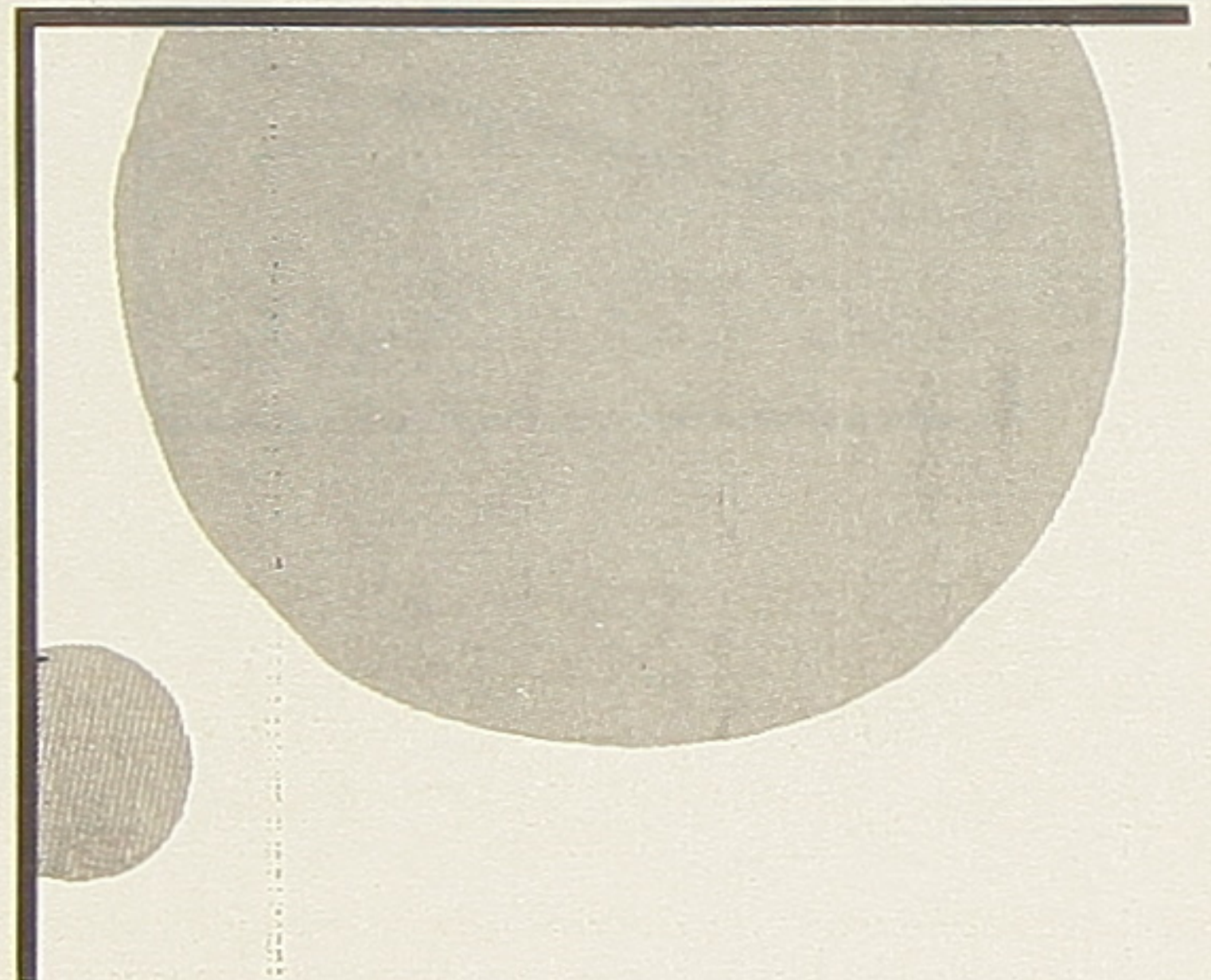


Julia Cheung



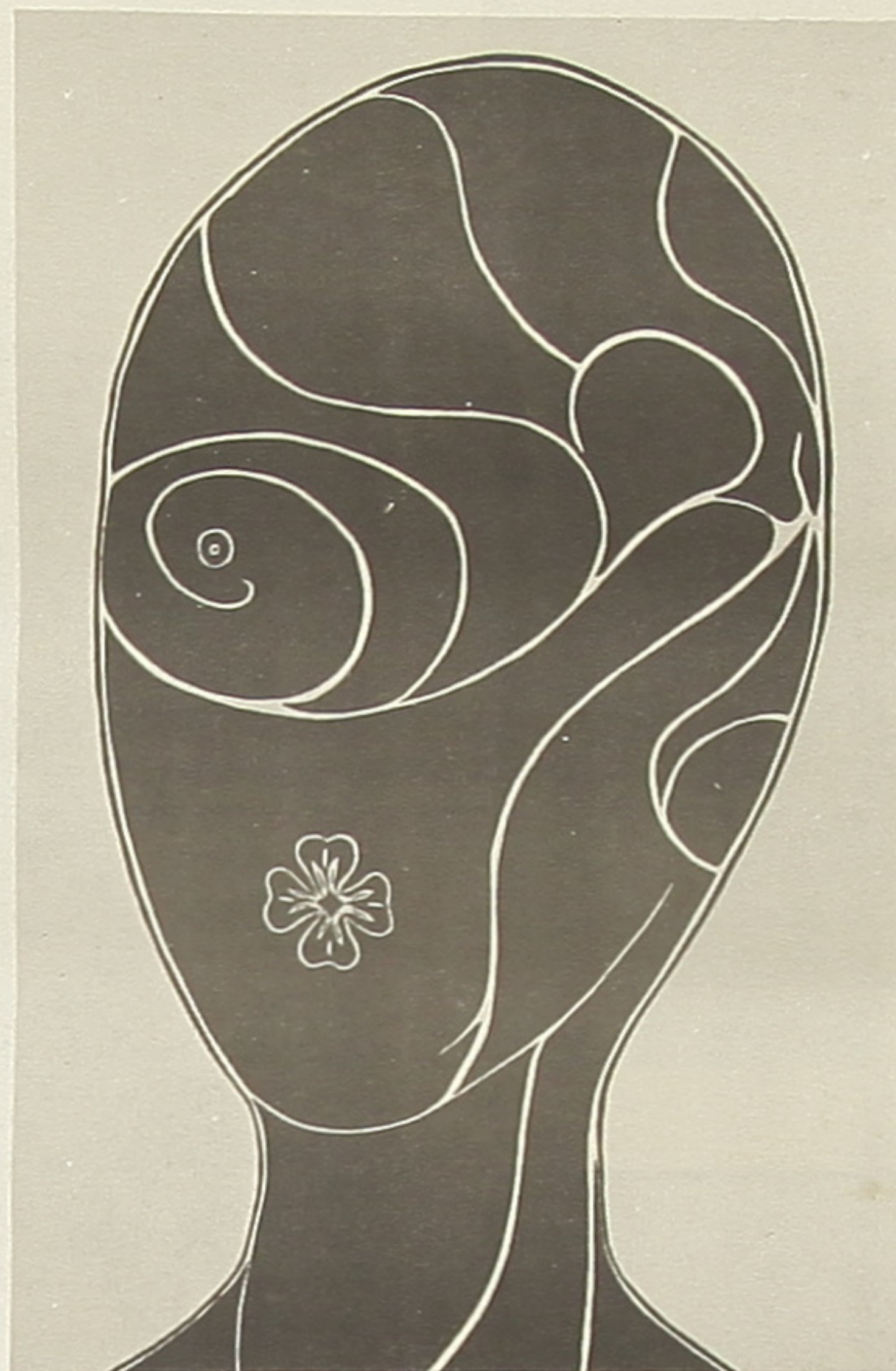
"Ghosts From the Past"

Julie Procyk Smith



Read My Mind

Through all my years
 I've been so self-serving
 At any cost
 Saving face
 Image preserving
 Molding my life
 To fit my purpose
 Didn't care what anyone thought
 Always said,
 "I'll never be bought
 Or be in anyone's service."
 As a result
 I was a slave to myself
 Strove to make myself
 Excrutiatingly happy
 Only trouble was
 I'm not at all easy to please
 Then I began to feel
 A sensation of vast emptiness
 An ever-deepening abyss
 Others would call
 Loneliness
 But what would I call it?
 One perfect as I?
 Perhaps a vast emptiness
 I always delighted
 At my detachment
 From normality
 Not for a moment realizing
 That this meant
 Alienation
 I never once believed
 That to sit upon a pedestal
 One must be
 Alone
 Only room enough for
 One
 "Oh, look at little Marcus,
 He could read and talk
 Before he could even walk!"
 "Yes, he's going to go far
 When he grows up!"
 The only question I have is
 When's that gonna be?

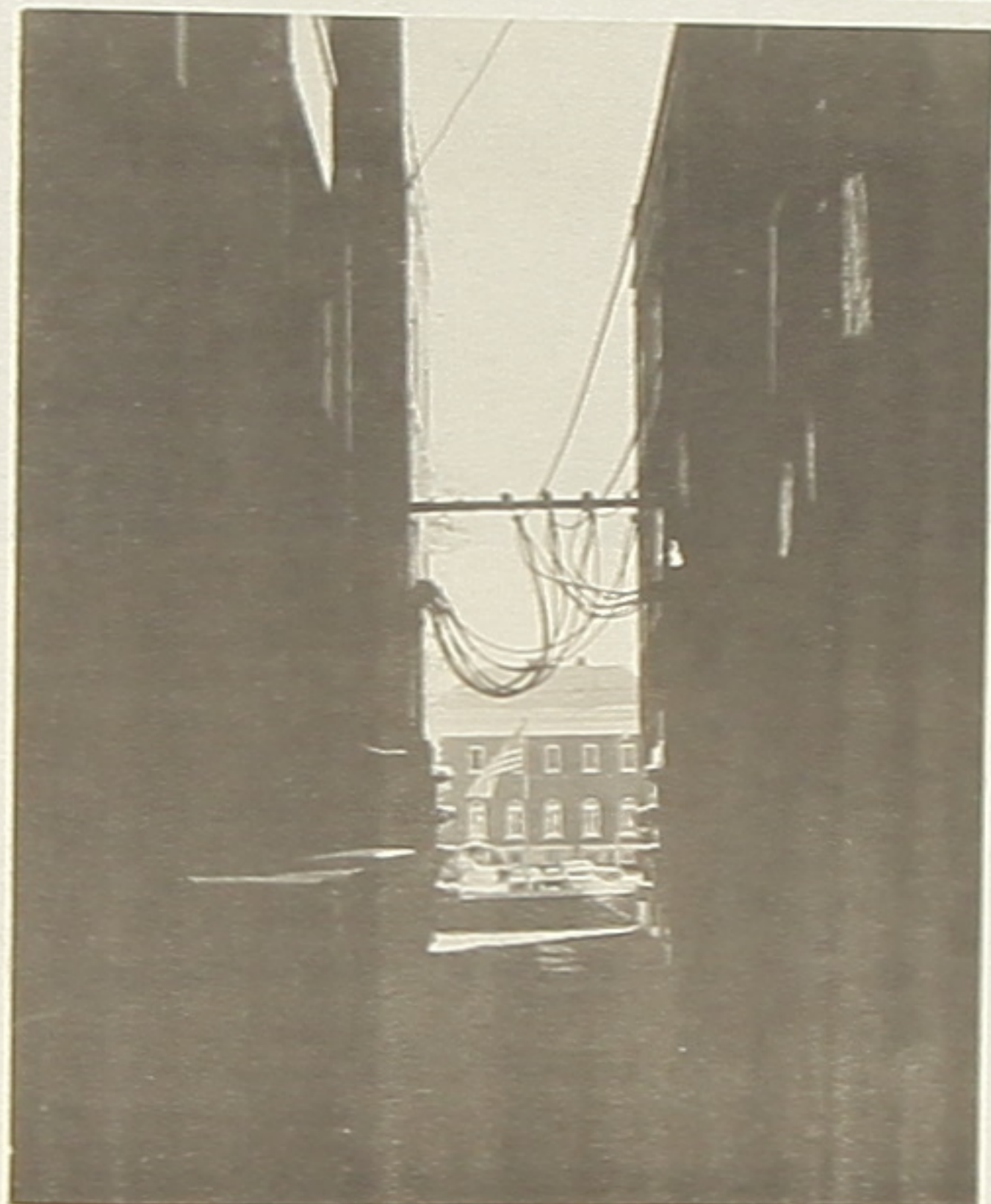


Poetry by
 Marcus Martin

Artwork by
 Julia Cheung



Photos by
Sean Vanslyke
and
Martha Vaught



Evening Onto Winter

We crouched from newsprint
from the sun,
and wed with meadows
that grew green on gold:
we spoke with wind through trees,
our arms had wilted into one.

Into the loitered winter
we drank our moments
from an empty room,
when all but birds can break their wings
as voiceless ice and time consume.

Randy Scott

HEDONIST'S HAVEN

Short Fiction
by
Chris Quarton

Blackness. Infinity itself. He was a part of it now. The spacecraft was small, but it was still able to serve his needs. Though he was in suspended animation, Bradius knew where he was headed. At long last, he was sleeping comfortably. Finally, he was away from

Earth. Ah, yes, the marvelous human race. Bradius had left behind the wars and that which he could not accept. He watched their greeds and wants and lusts drive them against each other. And he, with his idealistic philosophies, was looked down upon by others.

Who was he to judge them? After all, weren't they only doing what came naturally to them? Bradius was an outcast. So, he programmed the ship's computer to take him to a habitable planet which was as far away from Earth as possible. Perhaps there

he would be able to start anew. If there were life forms, he prayed that they were capable of understanding him. As always, he was taking quite a risk.

For as long as he could remember, he had searched for truth in the world. Since he was born in the 22nd century, technology had reached an impressive peak by any standards. But that was hardly important to him. Bradius was like Galahad searching for the Holy Grail. Seeker of the seemingly unattainable.

Intense relief overcame him as he stepped out of the cryogenic unit. His sight was somewhat blurred at first. He took a deep breath and smiled. The ship had landed on his virgin world. Now, he was free.

When he emerged from the spacecraft, the warm air and green grass made him very comfortable and at peace with himself. "My new home," he whispered.

And they came to him. At first, he was surprised to see other human beings like himself. The men and women seemed perfectly content. They wore simple clothing and laughed as though suffering did not exist. Bradius decided to acquaint himself with his new people.

And, lo, they entered the Garden of Eden. As far as Bradius could tell, there was no true leader among them. In fact, there seemed to be no form of government present whatsoever. These people lived, for the most part, however they pleased.

To Bradius, they were strange in a way. They reminded him of carefree children who had no worries.

"It's been a long time since I've heard laughter," he thought.

But he soon learned some rather unpleasant truths about them. They ate whenever they wished. Animals were hunted for food, of course. They derived sweet juice from fruits. Ah, the juice. Its taste was bitter, but it made everyone feel good. There were apparently no inhibitions . . . no sense of right or wrong. Each day, the men and women indulged their sexual drives with each other.

Indeed, they lived for passion. Their epicurean way of life was obvious to him from the beginning.

Mostly, those who lived in the village made tent-like structures from animal skins and any other available materials. There were no machines. Their existence was so primitive that it took Bradius some time to adjust to it. He could have gone elsewhere in the ship, but he chose to stay.

"They need my guidance," he told himself.

Prellin, one of the older gentlemen in the village, spoke with Bradius one day about his new life.

"You're going to love it here," he said. "How often have you had a chance to live your life free? Totally free, my friend. Oh, yes, you're going to love it here."

"But I have been in a place such as this," Bradius replied. "Back on my homeworld. My people, my brothers and sisters, were very much like this. Prellin, they fought wars continuously. Please, listen to me. I feel a kinship with these people which I cannot deny."

Prellin smiled. "Long ago, our ancestors fought conflicts much like the one you spoke of. But you see, Bradius, the survivors realized that life is a special gift. And that it should be lived for pleasure, not pain."

Laughter surrounded Bradius. "I see, but in many ways I do not understand."

Prellin nodded his head. "Of course. And look at what we have to offer you!"

She was one of the most beautiful young women he had ever seen in his life. "And

"How often have you had a chance to live your life free? Totally free, my friend. Oh, yes, you're going to love it here."

is this the epitome of purity?" he thought.

She sat before him on the grass. There was an intensity in her eyes as she looked at him. She aroused desires in Bradius which he wisely chose to ignore.

"What is your name, my child?"

"Lusa." Her voice was melodic and pleasant.

"Do you . . . live your life free?"

She stretched out on the grass. She said nothing. Instead, she merely locked eyes with Bradius and smiled.

A cool breeze blew through paradise.

Several weeks passed. Bradius grew a beard and shoulder-length hair. He knew that the others were starting to perceive him as being unusual. He did not join in their hunts or any of their "games".

Time and time again, Prellin said to him: "Join us. Do not deny yourself."

"But I am what I am," Bradius reminded himself. "How can I be something I am not?"

Mid-afternoon. The members of the Society ate their food and drank the sweet juice. He watched them. Where was the order? Didn't things ever change?

Finally, he stepped up on a tree stump and spoke loudly.

"My brothers and sisters!"

Dead silence. All eyes were on him.

"I have lived among you for some time now. But, there is something I must tell you. You . . . all of you . . . are wasting your lives! Please, try to understand what I say. If we are to live together, we must have laws to govern our actions! Please . . . know that it is true. I have become convinced no action would shock any of you. Not even murder. There is another way! You treat each other more as objects of lust than human beings. I have seen you men force women at times to give in to your physical needs. This has to stop! Listen to me! What I am telling you is for your benefit. I . . . know how much you need each other. I also need companionship. However, we must all realize that emotions can drive us to perform acts of hatred and violence. You are all my brothers and sisters. I am the one who can show a new way of life! One based on morality and brotherhood. There is so much I can teach you. I need you. You need me. Let us start a new way."

The eyes staring back at him were filled with a sudden hatred. No. There would not be any changes. Who did Bradius think he was to try and establish himself as their ruler? No one had any such right. He would pay for his interference.

And they came upon him like vultures upon an eagle.

"Please," he pleaded. "Listen to me . . . I'm only trying to help all of you!"

Within seconds, he was unconscious. Wooden clubs were pounded onto his head. He had never known such pain before.

To the ruins they went. At one time, it was a city of magnificence and beauty. But now, it was nothing more than a reminder of what was before the wars. A wasted shell from the past.

The Society finally had all the materials it needed to do what had to be done.

Bradius regained consciousness and screamed out in terror as the nails were hammered into his wrists and ankles. The wooden cross was oh so hard. Tears streamed down his face.

"No! By all that's pure and good, no!"

And they all screamed out to him at once. Their voices mixed and eventually became undecipherable to him.

For a moment, his eyes locked with Lusa's. He watched her face of beauty turn to ugliness with its hatred.

"No," he said softly. "No . . ."

Blackness. Coldness. Death.

Untitled

Another year has come and gone
It was short and mighty long
A year that I will always hold
Along with the memories it bestowed
I have Loved and Laughed, and eventually cried
I shall cherish it all, never shall it die
Through this year I have learned
That Life is out for what it is, not to personally burn
Once this is accepted into the heart
From life, Ye shall never part

M.S. Beast

Untitled

They are three that walk as one
Constant companions, never do they separate
Like the Reaper, they are always present
Waiting to wrap their cold arms around you
Unlike the Reaper, you can break free of their dark, icy grip
To Live Life once again
Pain, Sorrow, and Depression are their names
A part of Life
But not permanent

M.S. (Mark Smith) Beast

1:56 A.M.

At this point my mind has snapped
Reality is a but a meager blur
With movement just another moment
And consciousness a blessing of youth
I turn to look upon my companions
Their eyes as glazed as mine
Together we are the target of pity
Our own, real or imagined
Certainly not that of others
For they are those who have left us here
Alone, struggling to shape and create
At 1:56 A.M.

Mike E. Prater

Deadline: Dec. 22